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ABSTRACT

This paper describes changes in German higher education as a consequence of the reunification of East and West Germany, focusing particularly on personal evaluation of East German faculty and assessment of their scientific expertise. An introduction reviews the major historical events that have shaped the current situation. The paper states that East Germany has 55 institutions of higher education with about 37,000 faculty members, but 90 percent of the nation's research capacity was actually located at the National Academy of Science or in special institutes where there were 15,000 scientists, of whom most are to be integrated into the universities. The process of personal evaluation is explained, noting that methods vary among federal states and among universities, describing the documentation used in evaluations, and commenting on the right to personal inspection of records and the right to make a statement before a final decision is made. The procedures to be used to assess the quality and scholarly excellence of East German university scientists are then discussed, noting the influence of politics and ideology in selecting East German faculty. The paper concludes that though universities continue to function, it is in the midst of an enormous social undertaking to reunify the nation. Five notes are included. (JB)

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Changes in Institutional Research in Germany

Replacement of Faculty in East-Germany

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This paper was presented at the Thirty-Second Annual Forum of the Association for Institutional Research held at the Atlanta Hilton & Towers, Atlanta, Georgia, May 10-13, 1992. This paper was reviewed by the AIR Forum Publications Committee and was judged to be of high quality and of interest to others concerned with the research of higher education. It has therefore been selected to be included in the ERIC Collection of Forum Papers.

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Chair and Editor
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1. Introduction

On October 3rd, 1990 Germany was reunified. We are still looking at a devastation that forty-five years of socialism have caused. The most painful legacy of communism in East Germany still resides in the minds, hearts and souls of its people. Public life and, to a large extent, private lives were dominated and controlled by the communist Party (SED). The criteria for selection of faculty was not primarily or exclusively determined by a person's expertise or scholarly excellence in a given field, but rather by the degree of one's socialist convictions. Career advancement was possible only if the party found a candidate's political state of mind, basic beliefs and attitudes to be acceptable. In short: the people were ruined, seduced, and blackmailed, perpetrators and victims at the same time [1)].

After World War II two to three million people were either driven from East Germany, fled from intolerable political and ideological pressures or were expatriated - if they had not already been deprived of their personal freedom and jailed. Among these individuals were most of the intellectual elite. The scientific community had been bled to death. It is quite obvious that also the content and quality of higher education suffered severely

from these circumstances. Moreover there are subjects which represented the ideology itself, e.g. history, law and economy.

Talking about the replacement of faculty in East Germany two issues have to be discussed, that is personal evaluation and assessment of scientific expertise.

2. Facts and Figures

Before going into the methods, some facts and figures may make the dimension of the problem perfectly clear.

East Germany has about 55 institutions of higher education, in which round about 37,000 faculty members used to be employed [2]. Only 10% of the research capacity, however, was located in universities. 90% was united or concentrated in the National Academy of Science or in special institutes, where there were another 15,000 scientists [3] of whom the greater part is to be integrated into the universities again. Thus we have to screen more than 50,000 individual cases. That is an enormous number, as you will see after hearing about the procedures in detail.

3. **Personal Evaluation**

It is the second time in Germany that persons in public positions have to answer for their political conduct and attitude during times of dictatorship. Nevertheless the common ground of Nazi-Germany and communist East-Germany is very small. There are no trials, cases or legal proceedings from that time to fall back on. The Nazis ruled, or more strikingly, caused havoc, for "only" 12 years, the communists for 45 years. The common question, however, remains: Who can claim to be guiltfree?

That is not only a matter of criminal law, but to a large extent a tightrope walk between claims to employment and unreasonable continuation of work because of political considerations. The atmosphere in East Germany vacillates between right and revenge. But rage has never been a good advisor. So right and law have to determine the personal evaluation.

The basic document for German unification, the "Treaty of Unification", also contains legal requirements concerning universities and other instituitions of higher education[4]. According to the

Treaty the deadline for evaluation expires at the end of 1992.

Since no more rules were stipulated by the federal legislator, and since there is no equivalent situation in history, a multi-colored bunch of proceedings and methods came into being varying from federal state to federal state or even from university to university.

It would be far beyond our scope to explain in detail why the Länder (states) faced the problem so differently, although they were in the same starting positions. Also how they did it can only be touched fleetingly and roughly.

Nevertheless, all proceedings have two things in common. That is the existence of personal files, which were started for each citizen at the latest by the time they went to school, and which were updated regularly throughout the stages of their lives. The filing cabinets in the former GDR have an extent of several hundred miles. The central office of the secret service (Staatssicherheitsdienst) in Berlin had the biggest collection of data at its disposal and coordinated the observation statewide using modern data processing.

After the collapse of the GDR the federal government of the united Germany established the so-called "Gauck-Bureau", an authority responsable for answering data inquiries of inidvidual victims, and also of other authorities, such as courts, public prosecutors, police etc., and also of evaluation committees. This bureau took charge of all files and data available in East Berlin, which amounted to a length of more than 200 kilometres.

The other common element of the proceedings is formed by the constitutional and legal background, that is the principles of a state under the rule of law. Specificaly the fundamental right of personal inspection of records and the right to make a statement before a final decision is passed, has to be heeded. In short, the evaluation proceedings must bear close examination by jurisdiction.

The crucial difference of the proceedings was - and still is - the composition of the evaluation committees and the way they were set up. Some are based on a legislative act, some only on executive regulations, some had no legal basis at the beginning at all.

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A delicate question always was whether a committee should be headed by an experienced lawyer or judge from West Germany, or whether it should at least have members from West Germany. People in East Germany are oversensitive and touchy whereever the issue rises whether they are capable of managing their past themselves or not. The fact is that they experienced the injustice and that they grew up and lived with their oppressors. That makes them predetermined to judge the general and inidvidual circumstances.

On the other hand there is nobody in East Germany who learned the significance of fair and legal proceedings, not to mention the knowledge of how to handle them. Thus the best thing was to form mixed committees which is the general practise now. But there are also persons passing judgement on their own. You will find many varying precedures all over the country.

4. **Scientific Assessment**

The second issue of this presentation shall be the assessment of quality and scholarly excellence. Theoretically the tools and

methods are available. The problem is as old as the existence of universities themselves. But the conditions on which you have to find it out and the aims to be pursued vary.

As I mentioned at the beginning the selection of faculty in East Germany had a strong political and ideological component[5] This applied also to the content of teaching and research. In contrast to personal evaluation, standards of quality and scientific excellence are more approachable by objective references, and also in contrast to personal evaluation the procedures have been tried and tested in West Germany and are suitable for this unique situation as well. So West German standards and procedures are being applied everywhere, and in all procedures West German professors participate.

The general structure is as following:

- the candidate applies for a professorship, attaching c.v., publication list, list of lectures, references etc.
- a member of the appointing committee checks the papers and reports to the committee in writing;
- the candidate gives a lecture to the committee in the field of interest for the position;
- the committee discusses the presentation in general

and specifically and nominates the candidate for the chair or not;

- the decision making body of the department the chair belongs to decides finally.

Even if a high percentage of faculty in East Germany passes through this eye of a needle, which can be likely in natural sciences or medicine, there remains a big gap to fill all chairs and vacancies. Some, but not an approximately sufficient number of young professors as well as up-and-coming academics from West Germany have applied for jobs in East German universities and moved there. Many schools, namely such as law and business administration, organized so-called "flying faculties", that is a group of faculty who teach at their home university and in East Germany in the same semester. In addition, a lot of professors from West Germany are teaching in East German universities by private engagement. But all this is only acceptable and possible for a transitional period.

5. **Final Remarks**

The things may seem to be put on an orderly basis. But appearances are deceptive. The biggest problems are time and

appropriate personnel, and that spoils best intentions. Students are enrolled, life goes on. There is no stoppage. Everything is expected to be done at the same time: Sue the criminals, redress injustice, build up authorities, courts and offices, answer applications and actions, replace faculty and administrative personnel, terminate, initiate and adapt study programs, continue lectures and examinations etc., etc. A whole state has to be turned upside down. We have only been able to look at a small part of it here.

Notes and References

1) For the background see: de Rudder, H. (1991), Higher Education in Turmoil. University of Lüneburg, Institut für Hochschulforschung, Arbeitsbericht 27, paper presented to the 13th EAIR Forum, Edinburgh, September 1991; and Schultz-Gerstein, H.-G. (1991), Changes in Institutional Research in Germany. Paper presented to the 31th AIR Forum , San Francisco, May 1991: ERIC Collection ED 336 019.

2) HIS Hochschul-Informations-System GmbH (1990), Hochschulstudium in der DDR. Statistischer Überblick, page 14, Hannover: HIS

3) Bildung in der DDR, catchword "Akademie der Wissenschaften der DDR", (East-)Berlin 1984.

4) The Treaty is documented in a paperback edition: Die Verträge zur Einheit Deutschlands. München 1990

5) See de Rudder (note 1) page 5.